From: Stephen Wyman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/2/02 5:01pm
Subject: microsoft-tunney commentary

microsoft.atr@usdoj.gov

Renata B. Hesse,
Quick intro:
I've been a PC tech (desk side & Help Desk/telephone), PC installer & user since 1986. So, I've accumulated some technical expertise about PCs.

In 1998 I shopped around for a home PC. No PC OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) would sell me a PC without an Operating System (OS). No PC OEM would sell me a PC with the LINUX OS installed. The only OS that I could get installed on any new PC was one of the latest versions of Microsoft Windows (NT or 95). My wife and I both used Windows NT at work, so that was the option we chose.

My wife is a veteran of Microsoft's OSs and would not even consider buying an Apple computer using the MAC OS. I could not convince my wife that all the blood, sweat & tears she spent learning Microsoft's OSs wouldn't be wasted. She wouldn't even go down to KINKOs and lease the use of a MAC for an hour to see how easy an Apple computer was to own & operate (Summa Cum Laude from Rice University and an MBA from UT; she's quite astute normally).

Finally we selected Gateway as the OEM, and purchased a PC. The PC could only be ordered with Microsoft's Internet Explorer (IE) as the Web browser, so that's what we ordered. When the PC was installed at the house I used it to go to Gateway's web site and used the link (provided on Gateway's web site) to go to Netscape's web site for the purpose of downloading, then installing Netscape's web browser. Successfully linked to Netscape's site and downloaded the browser, twice. Each time I installed the new browser PC system errors started to happen and escalated till finally the 'blue screen of death' appeared. I had to do a low level format (wipe out all the software installed on the PC's fixed disk drive), and reload all the PCs original software to recover the computer to operational status. I now access the World Wide Web via IE exclusively, because it isn't worth the hassle to do otherwise.

Recently my wife tried to get an upgrade to the OSs Service Pack, so that we could get the 128-bit encryption option used for PC banking via the Internet. Three times my wife ordered the software upgrade (prepaid by credit card each time), but the upgrade never came (it was never billed or shipped by Microsoft).

Microsoft was only a few months from shipping it's new OS (Windows XP) and couldn't be bothered to sell an upgrade to Windows NT 4.0's Service Pack. The first release of anything 'new' from Microsoft is always a technical nightmare of discovering errors that should have been fixed before the software was brought to market. Therefore, we quickly went to a local retail outlet and purchased the Windows 2000 OS. '2000' had been on the market long enough to get most of the 'bugs' worked out, and had the 128-bit encryption we sought.

To sum things up:

1) The Microsoft monopoly has been an enormous pain in the backside to this household of PC consumers.
2) To have the Department of Justice, and some of the 19 state's Attorneys General, win their anti-trust case against Microsoft then just roll over and settle for no real punishment is disappointing and seriously aggravating!
3) If excepted as proposed the Consent Decree almost guarantees the anti-trust suit will start again.

Sincerely,
Stephen Wyman
Network Specialist
TxDOT
swyman@dot.state.tx.us